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Proposed by Examiner for Conditional Allowance with Terminal Disclaimer fee.

Claim 1: (currently amended) In wet electrostatic precipitation-based apparatus for detecting the presence of an airborne chemical or biological analyte, the improvement comprising: Providing an electrostatic precipitator to the wet electrostatic precipitation-based apparatus, wherein the electrostatic precipitator consists of: A). A gas-and liquid-containing chamber; B). Means for introducing an analyte-free collection liquid into said chamber; and C). Means for rapidly sampling a volume of ambient air and transferring said analyte therefrom into said collection liquid, said sampling means consisting of: comprising an air intake means, an air venting means, and means for removing from said chamber an analyte-enriched collection liquid; wherein said volume of air passes through a substantially horizontal air inlet and thence through a substantially vertical electrically conductive collector electrode tube with means for applying and adjusting an electric field between said tube and a co-axial spiked wire- or rod-shaped discharge electrode, said collector tube and discharge electrode forming part of said chamber, wherein said electric field is high enough to effectuate a corona discharge so as to generate ionized particles that could be driven towards said collector electrode by an electric field, and wherein said removing means comprises means for feeding said enriched liquid to an appropriate detector or storing said liquid for subsequent analysis.

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Claim 2: (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1, comprising means for introducing a fine mist of droplets into said vertical conductive collector tube so as to cause ~~substantially~~ full wetting of the inner surface of said tube by a liquid film.

Claim 3: (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 2, wherein said mist is generated by an ultrasonic humidifier.

Claim 4: (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 2, comprising means for generating and transmitting ultrasonic waves across the interface between said vertical conductive collector tube and said liquid film so as to help transfer particles or biological cells adhering to the tube surface from said surface into said film.

Claim 5: (currently amended) In a wet electrostatic precipitation-based method for detecting the presence of an airborne chemical or biological analyte, the improvement comprising the steps of: Providing an electrostatic precipitator to the wet electrostatic precipitation-based apparatus of Claim 1, wherein the electrostatic precipitator which consists of: providing a gas- and liquid-containing means; introducing an analyte-free collection liquid into said containing means; rapidly passing a volume of ambient air through a sampling means forming part of said containing means and comprising an air intake means and an air venting means and transferring said analyte therefrom into said collection liquid by passing said volume of air through a substantially horizontal air inlet and thence through a ~~substantially~~ vertical collector electrode tube while applying an

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electric field between said tube and a co-axial spiked wire- or rod-shaped discharge electrode, wherein said electric field is high enough to effectuate a corona discharge so as to generate ionized particles that could be driven towards said collector electrode by an electric field; and removing from said containing means an analyte-enriched collection liquid and either feeding it to an appropriate detector or storing it for subsequent analysis.

Claim 6: (currently amended) The method of claim 5, comprising the step of introducing a fine mist of droplets into the air stream passing through said vertical conductive collector tube so as to cause ~~substantially~~ full wetting of the inner surface of said tube by a liquid film.

Claim 7: (previously presented) The method of claim 6, wherein said mist is generated ultrasonically.

Claim 8: (currently amended) The method of claim 6, comprising the step of generating and transmitting ultrasonic waves across the interface between said vertical conductive collector tube and said liquid film so as to help transfer particles or biological cells adhering to the tube surface from said surface into said film.

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Claim 9: (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said vertical conductive collector electrode is tube-shaped with its inner surface electrically conducting.

Claim 10: (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said vertical conductive collector electrode is a metal or other electrically conductive material or comprises an electrically conductive coating or foil applied to the inner surface of a non-conductive tube.

Claim 11: (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 9, wherein said collector electrode has a roughened ~~preferably~~ sandblasted inner surface.

Claim 12: (currently amended) A method of capturing for detection from a volume of air aerosolized particles as small as 0.01 micron in size which comprises passing said air through ~~an~~ the wet electrostatic precipitation-based apparatus of Claim 1. ~~a wet electrostatic precipitation-based aerosol collector, wherein said collector comprises a vertical collector electrode tube and a co axial spiked wire or rod shaped discharge electrode.~~

Claim 13: (previously presented) The method of claim 12, wherein said particles are virus particles.

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Claim 14: (previously presented) The method of claim 12, wherein said particles are toxin particles.

Claim 15: (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1, comprising means for keeping said central wire-or rod- shaped discharge electrode at a high negative or positive potential, ~~possibly of as much as~~ as 10 KV or higher, and wherein said vertical conductive collector electrode is tube-shaped with its inner surface electrically conducting, and said horizontal tubular air intake permits air to enter unimpeded at a high flow rate, possibly as high as 500 liters/minute or higher, with a minimal pressure drop.

Claim 16: (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 2, comprising means for assuring that said liquid film be at least 25 microns thick, so as to minimize collection losses due to captured particles adhering too firmly to the collector electrode.

Claim 17: (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 16, comprising means for forming said liquid film by dripping liquid from the top down a roughened, ~~preferably~~ sandblasted, metal surface and/or by liquid droplets that are carried by the sampled air.

Claim 18: (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 16, comprising means for fine-tuning the thickness of said liquid film by adjustments of the power of an exhaust air

blower and of the inter-electrode voltage and electric field distribution such as to assure that the introduced mist results in ~~proper~~ wetting of the vertical conductive collector-electrode without causing unwanted spark discharges.

Claim 19: (currently amended) The apparatus of claim 1, wherein said electrodes and said electric field are so designed as to generate a sufficient corona to ionize a collection volume of 35 mL containing ~~of the~~ particles in the air stream and a sufficient electric field to deposit ~~most of these~~ particles with an efficiency of at least 87% at the vertical conductive collector electrode, and wherein the length and diameter of said vertical conductive collector electrode are such as to allow an adequate residence time for the ~~most~~ particles to reach it rather than be carried away with the air stream.

Claim 20: (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 4, comprising means for operating the system in alternating dry and wet modes so as to cut down on evaporation losses during operation in the dry mode and thus reduce the water replenishment requirements and to also limit the occurrence of any power losses due to spark discharges to relatively brief wet wash-down periods.